



evie johnson '79



1979

Cover: Evie Johnson

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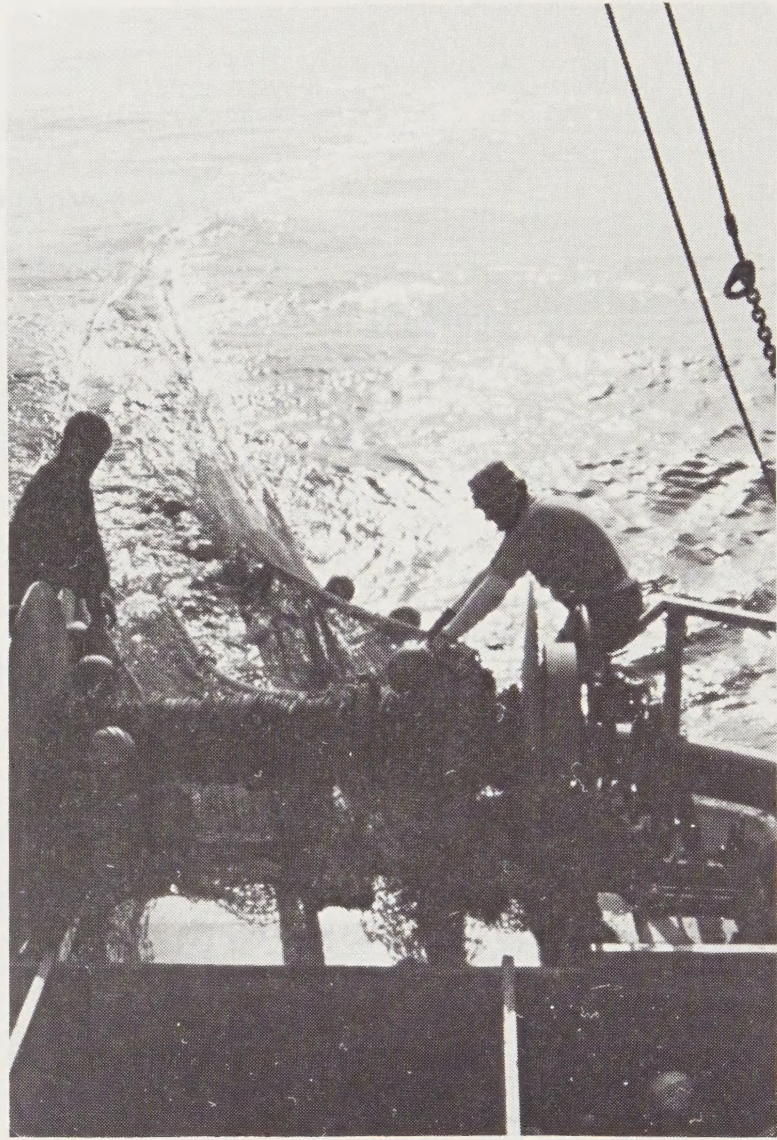


photo: Mickey Bambrick

## THE PRAWNS

*In and out of sleep. Waking from a shallow doze to hear the sound of the thumping diesel in the engine room just the other side of the bulkhead, to listen as the sound vanishes, as the ears stop hearing the monotonous drone that has been constant for the last forty-two hours.*

*There are still three hours of forecastle time left. Fog banks of sleep roll calmly over the mind again, giving a sense of security. But sleep takes away those promised hours and leaves minutes in their place, and the next sound heard will be the yell of the captain shouting, "haaauuuuling-up."; those dreaded words. Instead better to stay awake, to stare at the rolling ceiling and have time to think. Grief racks the body in the darkness of the forecastle, the hopelessness of the situation; tears run down a weather-beaten face past the bristle of two days, safely concealed by the darkness of the cabin from the scrutiny of the other crew members sleeping only a few feet away. I fall asleep.*

*Dawn greets me with icy fingers and an embrace that chills to the bone. Salt spray covers my face as I grope to get into the slimy, wet oilers and water logged boots that have been left on the deck during the night. The deck lights aren't yet on and the shore is visible through the drizzle of the dawn. The sullen, black hills of Ireland's eye ride the horizon like a school of spouting whales. To be awakened at two to face a cold dawn and a slimy deck can't be much different from being in hell. The winch has been started; we're hauling-up.*

*The net has finished its ascent from the from the sea floor; now bobbing on the surface of the water like some grotesque sea serpent, it awaits attention. On the back deck I'm playing a game of tug-O-war with this belligerent net. First I pull it in mesh by mesh; then, picked up by the ugly green swells, it is pulled back out of my hands. Finally the serpent is aboard, and it is time to sort the prawns and decapitate them, for it is prawns that we are hunting. Prawns that will be picked up by pudgy, little hands, shoved into pudgy, little faces and consumed by pudgy, little people.*

*Four hours later I have shoveled the last scoop of prawns from the deck to the sorting table. The two crew members have finally grown weary of chattering in Gaelic to each other and finish the job of tailing in silence. How the prawns wriggle and squirm when their bodies are separated from their heads.*

*Guilt, frustration and anger suddenly pound me like the frigid green swells breaking over the bow. The other crew members vanish to their bunks, and I am left on deck watching sky and sea tangle with each other, becoming one. A prawn left in the folded net struggles feebly with a mesh, tires and dies. Maybe there will be an empty bunk tonight.*

**Ethan Winslow**

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## **MAD MOROCCAN**

*Caftan taken by the wind  
Transports a dark face within.  
Blown along a tan, clay wall  
This white feather swirls, stops  
Revealing sandstorm raging  
Inside flapping hood.*

*And from the storm two sabres shine.  
Turning he stares  
He cuts and tears  
He slices, he goes  
Leaving victims always whole,  
the mad Moroccan behind the wall.*

**Ethan Winslow**

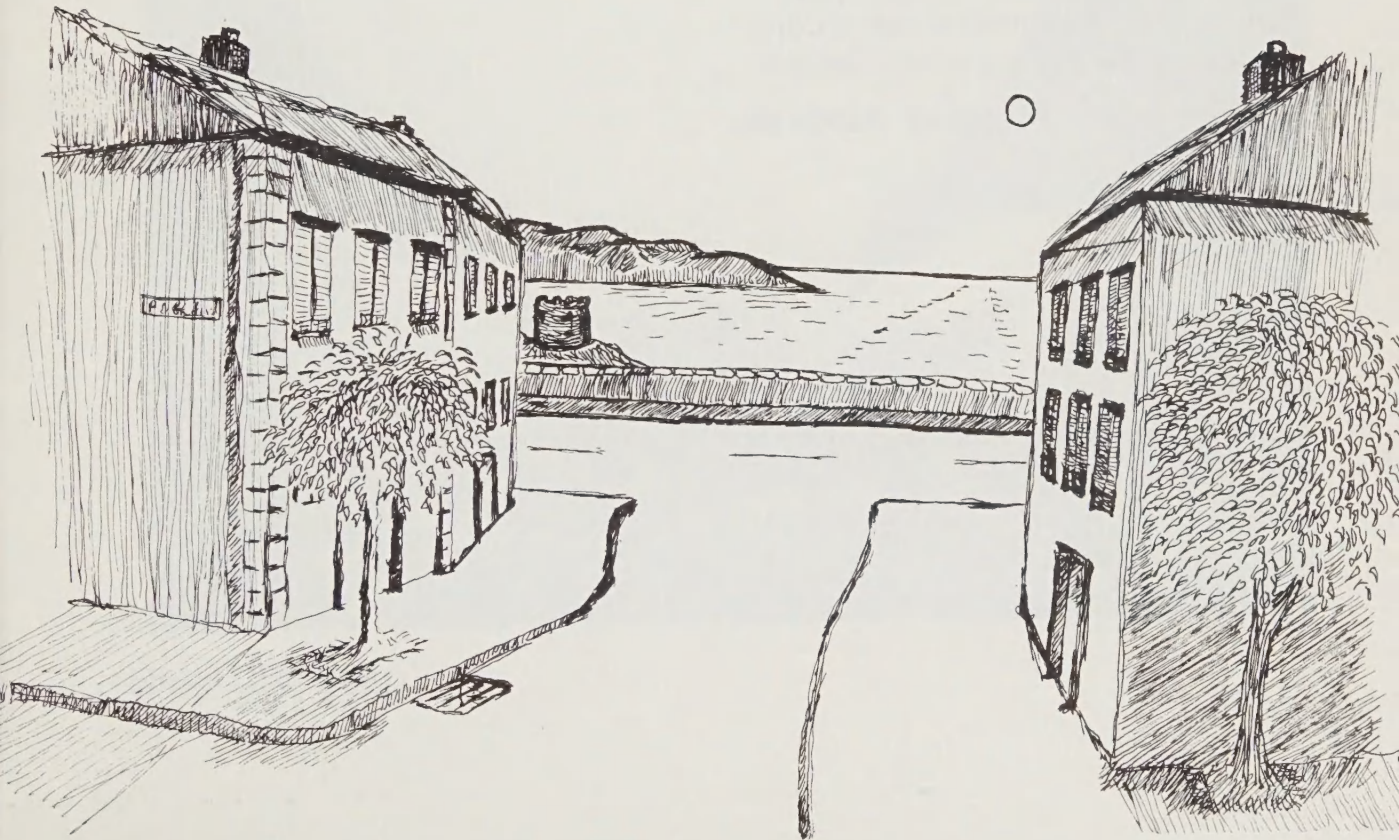
**art: Ethan Winslow**



## LE FOU

*Oh village fool  
Who stalks the night  
Takes his footsteps for a walk  
Sings and dances to a silent song  
Applauds the moon, a happy face.  
Oh lunatic  
How can I join you?*

**Ethan Winslow**



## THERAPEUTIC METAPHOR

*Seductive in its promise to surprise,  
To entertain, to thrill with horror-joy,  
Volcano sits familiar and unknown,  
Shifting, sighing, thundermuttering;  
No still mountain, but a mountain still.  
Half-concealed its awesome core, alive  
With power to destroy, betrays itself  
Each time it breathes its deadly silver  
plume.*

*Beware, my friend.*

*Attend to that which frightens you.*

*Protect yourself until the rage is done.*

*Return alive, to know what is become.*

**Alan C. Batchelder**





**photo: Linda Rugo**

## ALWAYS THE WIND

*Out of the southwest blows the wind, always the wind.*

*In summer soft as cat's paws playing with fern fronds, hydrangea leaves and fuchsia petals; teasing the pine needles, hemlock cones and Columbine seed pods; caressing the cheeks of school-free children and boat-bound fishermen.*

*The zephyrs in autumn whip the white caps into meringue on Youngs Bay at high tide and evaporate the mud flats into crust at low tide. They buoy the gulls in flight and ruffle the late robin's plumage.*

*On rare occasions an east wind blows downriver from the Columbia gorge bringing the heat from the Pendleton wheat fields along with the permeating smell of Longview's paper mills.*

*The southwest gale in winter jostles the shutters, breathes the curtains into a waltz, and insinuates the rain under the window casings. The water-filled gutters bounce along the eaves to the accompanying clap, clap of loose shingles at roof's edge.*

*The wind flutes into the fireplace chimney and plays grace notes in the firelight. The hemlock branches bow in obseisance to Mother Earth, while the cedars blow inside out. The weathervane sometimes spins out of function, its point twisted skyward as due North.*

*And a real sou'wester' defies man or beast to venture out. Asking to be heard and felt, it slams the heavy rain in great sheets against barns and sheds and boat houses on the bay's edge. It soaks the paving and the concrete bulkheads shoring up the house lots. It cracks open the giant hemlocks and snaps off the alders at ground level.*

*Fury spent in a hilarious night, the wind calmly calls again next day to survey the damage done. Always the wind, the everlasting wind.*

**Juanita Price**

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**photo: Brian Harrison**



## NO HEROES

*I look around  
is it my age or  
their insecurities  
that make it so unworthy  
this era*

*I look again  
eyes that have seen three generations  
no unalert to trends  
I nearly weep for them  
their despair*

*Despondent and meandering  
No Heroes  
is it their fault that no  
war abounds, no depression  
no heinous catastrophies*

*from the plasma of death  
springs life  
from the ambeogenesis, the  
dance of blood  
poetic magic abounds,  
from the corpses of humanity  
heroes aspire . . .  
from the still and lifeless form  
of prosperity and wealth,  
nothing rises  
save the stench of decay*

*SOON the warm guns will explode  
economic foundations will crumble  
before the treads of tanks  
literature and imagination will  
wage a war of survival  
to emerge, undaunted from the  
putrification of this era's smoking  
corpse*

*cheap thrills, disco  
pain rock  
anger turned inward  
the revival of athletics  
a simulated war?  
the subtle attempt at  
the blood and anguish  
that movitated feeling,*

*dissociation hysteria  
PINCH ME!  
PINCH ME!  
am I real, the ME generation*

*Soon to die with the WHOOSH  
of the first catapult*

**Christopher Robin**

## FOR RALPH

*some day I'll splice  
a comma  
or use a lifeless  
verb  
or be uptight  
over what I write  
for piping  
senseless blurb*

*my thoughts will wander  
fleeting  
to a moment fixed  
in time  
a lofty form  
a coffee cup  
dissecting,  
not too tenderly,  
my each  
and every line*

*every one of us  
that made the grade  
knew you'd escaped  
the bowels of Hell,  
to torment fledgling  
writers  
into somehow  
writing well*

*and we'll remember  
Ralph  
when we're stuck  
stymied on the butcher's block  
that penning is a lonely job . . .  
yer lessens aint fergot*

**Christopher Robin**



art: Christopher Winslow

## THE TIDE

*"Life begins in the estuaries," the naturalist said. "Get to know the tides first," advised the old-timers. The high tides fascinated Jacob in the beginning. The day the children blew away, the water rushed across the mudflats and rose to eight feet. The swimmers shivered against the wind. Two boys in a rowboat floated off till those onshore shouted, "Come back." The wind ripped the words out of their mouths and scattered them. The tide sucked the children toward the channel. The swimmers ran to call the Coast Guard. The children turned the boat; the waves hit sprick-sprock on the side and tipped them. They were heading out to sea when the Coast Guard pulled them away from the tide.*

*That first winter Jacob learned to sleep like the tide, rising an hour later every morning of the run. As he walked out to the beds, he realized what his grandpa meant when he said, "The bay's best when the tide's out." Jacob strode over goose-tongued greens and seaweed knotted along the shore. He stepped down the bank and crunched the golden oyster shells. He splashed through pools toward the bed. The oysters grew best near the channel. The clams shot up geysers when he slogged through the soft mud. From the shallow water where the seaweed floated, he heaved the clusters into bushel baskets. A shell cut his glove and he felt the rubbery coral on its edge. The worms waved their legs and hooked to him. Jacob filled the barge and clambered onto it. He flopped down, too tired to care about the stench of the drying mud. He waited for the water to float the barge and the skiff he'd used to follow the tide into shore.*

**Susan Pakener**

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photo: Mary Bambrick

## DAVID

*Yesterday a letter came, as the water  
began to mist over*

*I could feel the strength behind those  
heavy clouds, pushing against the  
shoreline.*

*Warning us toward the harbor to check  
the boats.*

*Greyness moving in . . . carrying a  
reminder*

*of hardworking days-brilliant sun  
spots.*

*Fishing with David and all his crazy  
energy.*

*He laughed at my warnings not to push  
his tender soul—*

*he promised he'd die young . . .*

*He awoke at 3:00 am to start the day,  
Hauling in those dollars he already has  
spent . . .*

*One day a whale ripped our net and we  
chased her*

*with cameras; Suzi and I*

*Weeping, (strong deckhands that we  
were)*

*Pulling on those lines to save our  
beautiful creature.*

*And David headed for the tanks and  
dove to set her free.*

*We spied her later, as we sunned on  
the beach, mending our net . . .*

*Welcoming each other as friends.*

*I can still see your face, David,  
chuckling as we pulled those lines.*

*Yester day a letter came, as the water  
began to mist over,*

*And I felt the strength behind those  
heavy clouds.*

*Saying you couldn't wait another day,  
But stayed out in the breakers with that  
delta wind rising sharp.*

*Laughing at my warning not to push  
your tender soul,*

*You promised you'd die young.*

**Joan Anway**

## JACI

*Last night in the fading light,  
I caught a trace  
of bikinis and thriftshop scarves,  
and my companion lady.*

*In days of golden pain we  
guided one another  
through our lovers'  
first demands.*

*Tracing roads through Southern  
France,  
Gibran and she and I  
confided on stolen  
Tuesday beaches.*

*Comforting one another's souls,  
as a child wrapped in smog  
before a bitter mother,  
We sought our own respite.*

*She stayed home imagining  
Alps and Andes,  
and I wandered listening  
for her tears.*

*Hearing stories of lust and adventure,  
We laughed together far apart.  
Catching neglected years  
with wine over dinner.*

*Until that day  
with rounded stomach  
I smiled at the stranger's face,  
Watching the shadows*

*fade into night.*

**Joan Anway**

## **SELF IMAGE**

*A woman's silhouette  
Takes my eye,  
Only to change upon the wind.*

*And as her silken image  
Takes to the breezes,  
Her soul dances with my senses.*

*Caressingly, softly speaking with my  
heart  
I wait  
To make the image whole.*

**Jan Allen**

## **GRANDAD DIED LAST SPRING**

*The desk where he laid his head  
To rest  
Was comfortable enough for him  
I guess  
'Cause he never woke up again*

**Jan Allen**

**art: Evie Johnson**





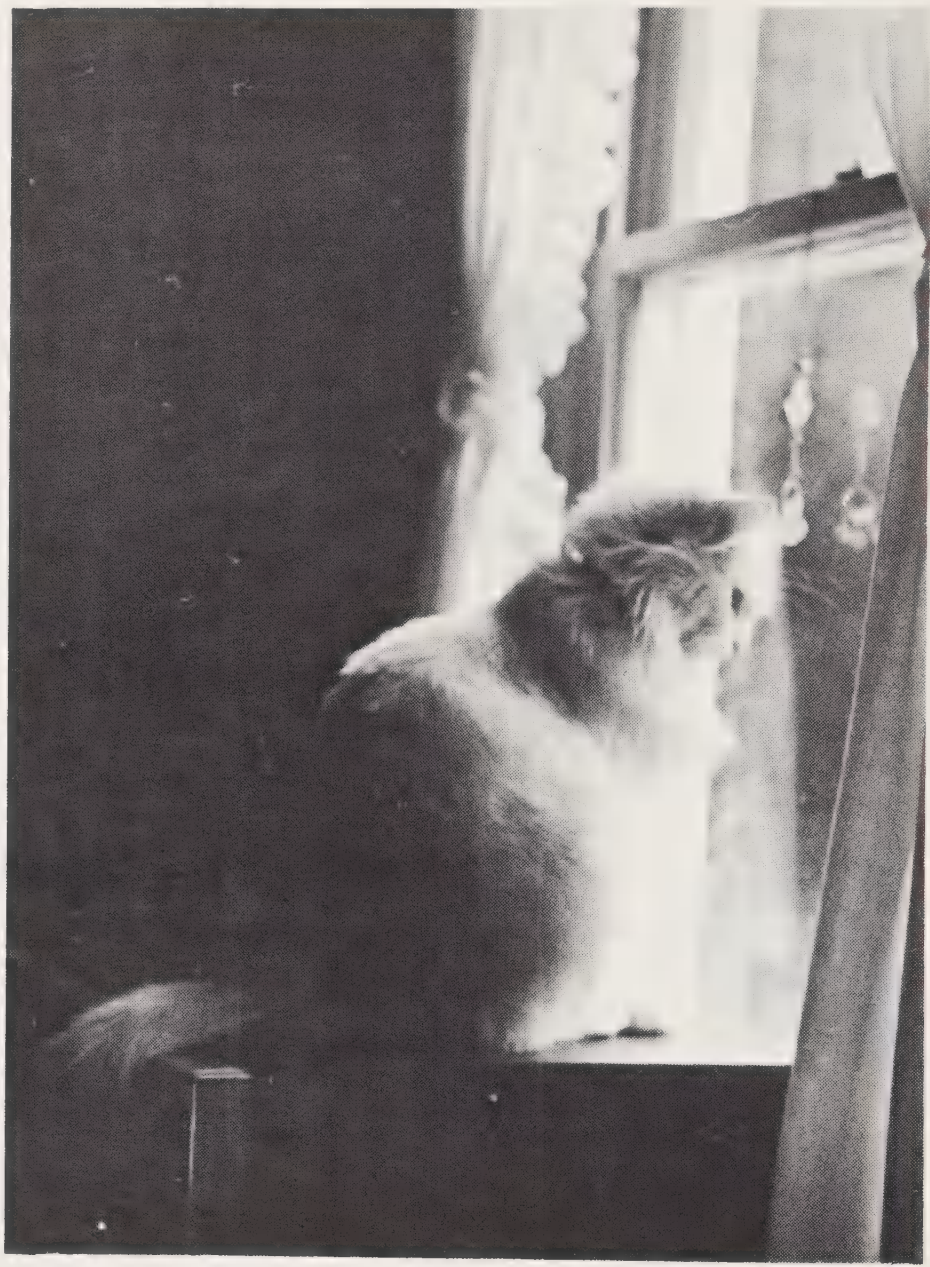


photo: Mickey Bambrick

*I FAIL SO OFTEN  
at being all that I'm  
capable of —*

*BUT THEN  
what's forgiveness  
for?*

**Mary K. Bambrick**

## **ABOUT SEAGULLS**

*Busy mornings  
                    year round  
the toughest  
part of my day*

*Waking up  
with that  
                    empty feeling —  
(and no hand-outs when it's raining).*

*I can spend my afternoons  
searching  
for friends and new places  
but after the sun sets  
I seek out my bed for the night*

*Where no one knows  
I'm alive.*

**Mary K. Bambrick**

## SECRETS

*Some things one must keep  
To oneself.  
I am dying. You will not know.  
My soul is seeping from my home,  
My walls are crumbling.  
When I tell you I am allowing no  
Visitors —  
You — with your split level con-  
sciousness —  
Comprehend:  
She's got a headache.*

**Katy Shannon**

*The anonymous writer  
No need to know his name  
Just listen  
And he will touch you  
In his infamous style  
  
He isn't the receiver of great gifts  
Just a simple messenger  
of the prophet deep within*

**The anonymous writer**

*Running*  
*The wind tearing through my mind*  
*Running*  
*In an era when there is no time*  
*Useless*  
*Why run away at all*  
*Useless*  
*Catch myself before I fall*  
*Weakening*  
*Deprived of my very soul*  
*Weakening*  
*There goes my every goal*  
*Defeated*  
*Listen to their mocking call*  
*Defeated*  
*Why run away at all*

**Markell Carper**

## MAN'S FATE

*A tiny bird falls from its nest. There is no more vulnerable creature. Naked where it lies, its future depends entirely on the next thing that comes along. A snake, a cat; there is little danger to them and little hope for the bird. But the compassionate man, he who would take the bird home to raise, he accepts the bird's very dangers, takes them unto himself; becomes, himself, vulnerable. For the bird will grow strong someday, and when thus strong, will thus be independent, no longer need the man, and will fly away without looking back.*

*And so it is when one finds a lonely person. There is no danger to the cat or snake; he may pounce freely, drink deeply and long, and leave when sated, for the person who needs him will accept it; demand it. Die for it. But, let the lonely into your heart, and you become the man who picked up the bird, took it home to raise. The danger is yours now, for your strength will flow, like electricity leaking across corroded terminals, and become the other's strength, the other's ability to no longer need you.*

**Dave Hughes**

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## A MAN AND HIS DOG

*He shuddered to see it, the man who first said, "A man and his dog grow to mirror each other."*

*A tired old man plodded along the path next to the river; around him pranced a long legged and clumsy puppy, spearing his nose into this rat hole, that bush, and falling into the water when he got too near it. From the other direction, running, full of energy, skipping stones across the flat, still water, came a young lad whose exhuberance was only exceeded by the exhaustion of the old dog following him. While the boy moved along in exploratory darts, the pooped old laggard moved straight along the path.*

*As luck would have it the first to meet were the two oldsters. Both were on the path while youth held a less steady course. Neither was inclined to give way to the other, so both collapsed to see what would develop. The old man sat stiffly in the grass; the old dog lay just out of reach. They ignored each other.*

*Soon the boy and the pup were on the scene, and as soon off about their exploring together. But they, too, stayed at arm's length. Though exploring the same piece of detritus at the same time, they seemed to ignore each other. It was as if by pooling their energies they could learn twice as much. Of such timber are lasting friendships built.*

*When at last all were together, four corners to a square, sitting on the edge of the path, the negotiations began.*

*"That's a fine dog you have," opened the old man.*

*"I've had him a long time." The boy looked at the pup.*

*"I get tired with the pup." The old man spread his hands on his thighs and looked at their heavily veined backs. "I just follow along and he does so much it wears me out."*

*The boy agreed, turning up his palms in a puzzled gesture.*

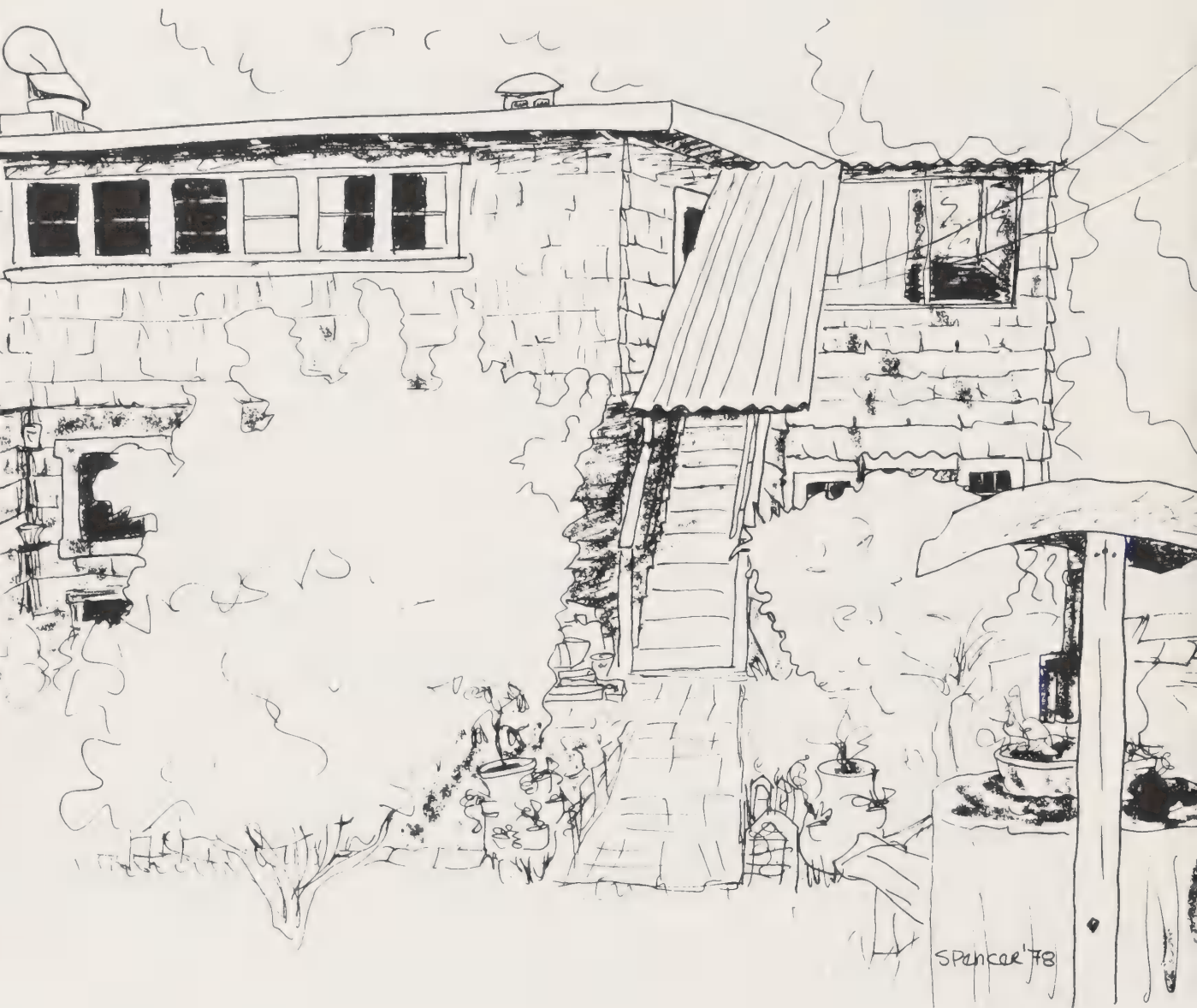
*"The old dog is boring," he said. "Never fun like he used to be."*

*The old man just nodded, slowly, for a long time. The old dog lifted its head, then laid its chin on its paws again, satisfied with the deal. The pup whined softly.*

*The lad got up and ran back the way he had come, but straight down the path. The pup jumped up and followed at a gallop, barking. Slowly the old man and the old dog got to their feet and shuffled away.*

*The man who said, "Dogs mirror their masters," breathed a sigh of relief, lowered his glasses a bit on his nose, settled deeper into his armchair, and returned to his reading.*

**Dave Hughes**



## **CYCLE**

*It is late February  
windows are cold and moist.  
We weep with winter voices  
wet and harsh.*

*Grandfather is dying  
while our Japanese Plum  
begins to bloom.*

**Laurie McRae**

*Yellow roses  
Pose  
Greenhouse perfect  
Against an ancient porch  
Purged hueless by age.  
The image  
Finds an empty seat  
In my memory.*

*Around the corner  
A new residence  
Obese in layers of brick  
Also grows roses.*

*I hardly notice.*

**Laurie McRae**

**art: Jan Spencer**

## TO MY CHILDREN

*I have murdered you  
Before you were conceived  
I had to cut myself off  
From this dying, deathless train  
of parents and children  
and having the Innocent ready  
to become us*

*Play your games people  
Philosophize, Fuck, and Die  
Your children will follow after*

*None will issue from my house  
For the train stops here*

**jekostenko**

## MUSES: TO THE WOMEN

I

*There are reasons for insanity  
Behind the logic and the law  
But they don't prevent the tenderness  
That freedom will allow*

*The relics and the rumblings  
Of storm clouds appear  
The horizons are boundless  
or so they say  
But realities are limited  
to here and now  
And the soliloquies of separateness  
The choir sings so sadly*

II

*Reaching and grasping  
for what is out of reach  
The seasons pass by  
calendar pages  
And the ultimate conclusion is:  
Some things never change*

Out upon the road  
or home in an airless box  
The logic is escaping  
Like bats into the night air

Still, magnets and iron attract  
Despite obvious differences  
The allegory is stretched  
But there are so few ways  
to say the things  
that boil up like lava flows  
From mountaintop to sea

III

Warrior woman hooded in white  
Eyes to the heavens  
But shakes, chills, and all the rest  
Still  
is was good wasn't it?  
Despite the rain drip  
steady beat of crows' wings  
Upon our houses  
Where no one lives  
except  
The fugitives from the future

**jekostenko**

**RATS' CLOSET W/ MARTYRS'  
BONES**

Dark on dark  
as if buried  
sunk  
out of sight  
Mind your step going down  
down  
down

As another savior  
burns himself at the stake

The cockroaches do a war-dance  
Circle the celery  
Last out with Vogue

Set your traps  
with unwanted children  
at the entrance to  
the Rats' Closet

**jekostenko**

*Walking softly, with my toes burying  
beneath the warm dry sand*

*I listened . . .*

*Across the crying of the seagulls  
and the crashing of the waves*

*I heard*

*A whispering voice . . .*

*It told me of lost men and wrecked  
ships*

*Of stormy nights, when neither man  
nor creature could weather  
the fury of the sea*

*I listened again for the voice and  
realized . . .*

*It was only the wind*

**Sharyn J. Smith**

*Balmy New York afternoon  
street people like  
color chips in kaleidoscope.*

**Ann Myers**

*The Hike  
Three miles in - Gung Ho!  
Three miles out  
Gung ho hum.*

**Ann Myers**



*The night is long past young;  
The fire has mellowed to a flicker  
Throwing strands of light across the  
room,  
Creating a blanket of silence around  
us.*

*There are no words tonight,  
The silence seems to say it all.*

*And I'm reminded of a time  
In front of the fire,  
With my arm around her,  
Listening to the storm  
Fighting to gain entry.  
Together we'd walked the beach  
With rain beating patterns in the sand;  
Now just keeping warm  
Apart from the world around.  
She said she loved me  
And would never leave,  
And . . .*

*My senses return  
With a crack from the fire;  
You laugh at the startled look on my  
face  
And say you love me  
And will never leave.*

**Gaylord K. Pearsall**

*And so ends another day  
Listening to the radio*

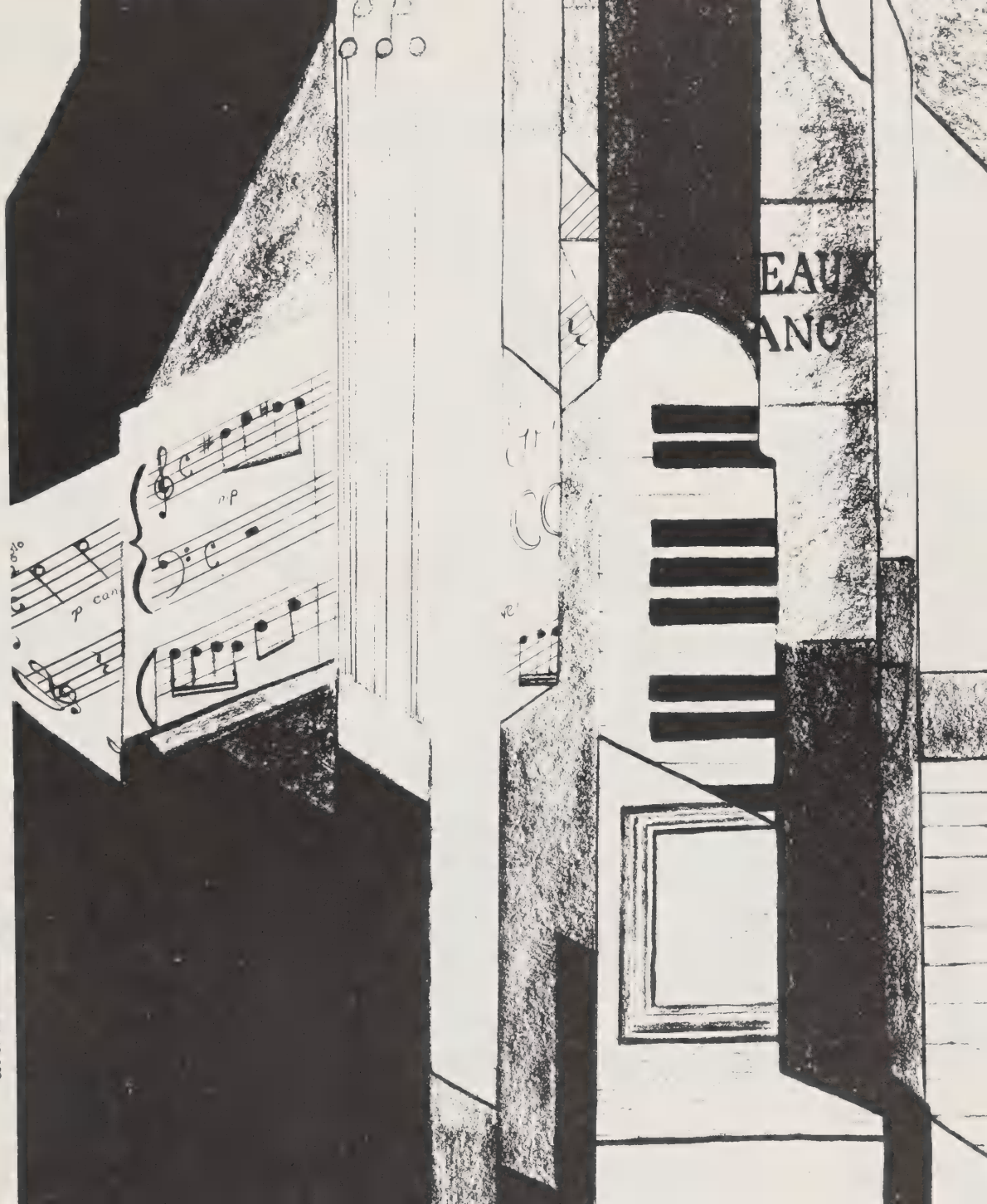
*absorbing each note  
Dissecting them  
Until they fade away  
As if pleased  
With their contribution  
To the continuous flow.*

*And so ends another wave  
Inching its way along the sand  
Bringing with it life  
For the sand,  
Until finally  
As if satisfied with its part,  
Returns,  
To the continuous flow.*

*And so ends another life  
Which is placed in the ground  
Which in time  
Becomes part of the ground  
To sustain new life;  
And it seems fitting  
Even I will contribute  
To the continuous flow.*

**Gaylord K. Pearsall**

art: Denise Cousineau





## IN SLICED FRUIT

*The two were driving along in the rain.*

*It was sopping  
and soaking  
and dripping  
and streaming all over*

*onto ferns  
and on rocks  
and in gullies  
and into pockets of earth.*

*And while it was falling  
he was whistling  
and humming  
and daduming a song*

*And she was being  
and thinking  
and feeling a love.*

*They rounded a bend and he shifted  
down.*

**Marie Stevens**

**art: Suzanne McKinley**

## I THINK THEREFORE I AM

*I think I feel funny.*

*Like my brain is moving and shifting  
direction inside my head.*

*Like some surrealist painting of a  
landscape with people  
cut up sort of in spirals with no insides.*

*Or like when I stand on the front porch  
and lean on the rickety table  
and watch the wind blow the plum tree  
and I'm not sure which is  
moving; the tree, the table, me or the  
porch.*

*It could be the porch; this is an old  
house*

**Marie Stevens**



## from **A COUPLE OF DAYS**

*Frank lost sight of the highway; the store was hidden in a niche behind a hill. But he was content, warm. He had bought one of the jackets in the store, originally picking one that wore the ghost of captains' bars on the lapel. But he had finally chosen one that fit comfortably. Rank didn't matter here. He nibbled at the ribboned dried-beef he had purchased earlier. Beef fed his cells. Energy for movement. His destination, everywhere, therefore, nowhere. A man with a thousand pins, a map with no pins; twins — if you're not there. But he was here, not on the head of a pin, not above, looking at a brittle paper with red and blue veins that seeped over it like a drunken eye, not truly seeing. He was here, now, in this meadow. And he was absorbing a strange power. He took notice of the exceptional, the very rare marigold or catch-fly, the fragile blade of grass from which a curious force of power blasted. Flowers, pale blue and purple and the grass an anemic green. The pallor of death upon them, but they stretched upward through the snow, emitting the power that only a struggle can give. Inspiring, courageous. Like the handful of mankind who composed, who painted, who created and awaited just one eye, one ear, to know their message and share their power.*

*Too soon, the flowers disappeared. The meadow behind, the forest ahead. Pines so tall! Man must always walk beneath the pines. Looking up, the pines lean together, so dense they clog the snows' path and the ground is warm with loosely woven needles. Shelter. It reminds Frank of the ribbed vaulting in the church he used to attend in Illinois. And the silence. Quieter than any church, holier, the staggering purity of God. So this is where he hid!*

*Sleep-inducing, the forest. Everything now slept. The trees are no longer troubled by the squirrels, the squirrels are not bothered by the wind. Nothing stirs but images. Frank lay down and slept for a couple of days.*

**Kenneth F. Schuerman**

**art: Rita Brown**



Susan XI-20  
Hemer

## SKYSCAPE WITH HAWK AND AIRPLANE

*a hawk  
framed in the window  
with wind-dependent freedom  
    buffeted and tossed  
    belly to the sun  
aloft on the current  
alive in the airflow  
    uplifted*

*the perne  
and the gyre  
of the poet  
are sketched by the quill  
on the will  
of a whisper  
of joy  
    life to the word  
    and back to the word  
    in the beginning*

*a plane  
distantly approaching  
behind the baroque  
    flight of feathers  
beyond the passion  
    of abandoned design  
between two points  
deliberate*

*irreverent  
so definite  
and so inanimate  
confusing the line  
and the purpose  
with meaning  
    death to the word  
    and back to death  
    in the end*

*and now the framed sky  
is empty  
airport and eyrie  
are presumed  
like all endings  
and now the framed mind  
is empty  
the poem spirals  
with word-dependent freedom  
recalled  
like all beginnings*

**John Lippincott**



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# RAIN 1979